

HIERARCHY OF NEEDS; BUILDING A PATH TO PEACE

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

HIERARCHY OF NEEDS; BUILDING A PATH TO PEACE

by

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ABSTRACT

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HIERARCHY OF NEEDS; BUILDING A PATH TO PEACE

It is needless to say that Charles Gordon held a totally different view of the soldier's proper sphere of action, and with him the building part of the soldier's profession was far more important than the breaking part.

—Colonel Sir William F. Butler¹
Charles George Gordon

To Learn a New Idea, Read an Old Book

Due to the character of the modern battlefield, a better understanding of human nature in general and Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Figure 1 on page 13) specifically will lead to new tools and tactics that will aid military forces to better resolve armed conflicts. As Clausewitz noted many years ago, "Many roads lead to success, and that they do not all involve the opponent's outright defeat." There are a wide variety of tactics and strategies to overcome an adversary's will, and the choice of which one(s) to use "depends on circumstances."² Circumstances today dictate a significant departure from the traditional role of the Armed Forces. This paper explores the environment in which armed conflicts are likely to develop, the importance of the population, and the relevance of the hierarchy of needs in resolving armed conflict.

Charles Gordon understood better than most, over 150 years ago, the nature of conflict and the ultimate purpose of the employment of force as he insightfully noted, "The nation that will insist upon drawing a broad line of demarcation between the fighting man and the thinking man is liable to find its fighting done by fools and its thinking done by cowards."³ Accepting the new environment and better understanding the hierarchy of needs will help formulate unique tactics for use during offensive and stability operations as well as strategies that best achieve success on the modern battlefield. As Sun Tzu noted centuries ago, it is not enough to rely on tactics that

brought victory to yesterday's fight, we must employ new tactics the enemy is not familiar with.

There is a wave of thinking and application of these principles in our current doctrine, many of the lessons born out of necessity more so than careful and comprehensive thought. We are on the right track with the introduction of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework (TCAPF) into our stability operation doctrine.⁴ It has served many units well in the last seven years. There are still many, however, that do not support this line of thinking, preferring to rest on dogma that dictates military force must be saved for, and used exclusively to physically destroy our adversary. We must continue to develop and thoroughly integrate the concept of using the hierarchy of needs into our ethos and operations.

There is great value in understanding how the one constant in warfare, human nature, and its hierarchy of needs fits into warfare, and how warfare therefore can and should be built around the hierarchy of needs. Maslow's work, although directed toward understanding the human psyche, provides valuable insight into human nature. It is this insight that is applicable to the modern warfighter. When tempered with Sun Tzu and Clausewitz it provides a road map for better influencing people on the future battlefield. As Maslow states, "There is obviously much to think about here, not only for the Marxian or Freudian, but also for the politician or military authoritarian..."⁵

This 'new' way of fighting is actually not new at all. There are examples of this concept, although perhaps not directly associated with the hierarchy of needs, throughout history. Within the past 100 years, however, there have been a variety of

forces and factors that have pulled us away from this human element of armed conflict. The most notable of which seems to be over reliance on technology that has allowed us to affect our adversaries with minimal direct interaction. This paper will explore three factors that lead to the conclusion of the importance and relevance of the hierarchy of needs as a battlefield tactic; the nature of war, globalization, and threats.

What is War?

Napoleon Hill, trusted advisor to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt commented, "War grows out of the desire of the individual to gain advantage at the expense of his fellow man."

War is fundamentally a social process where the clash of interests between groups is characterized by violent armed force. The essence of war is best described in Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1 as the "clash of hostile and independent wills each trying to impose themselves on the other."⁶ Clausewitz has great insight into the key components of war in the 'remarkable trinity', consisting of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity perpetrated respectively by the people, the commander (and his army), and the government.⁷ There is a distinct and balanced relationship in this trinity, and anything that causes it to become out of balance lessens the intensity of war. The most important things to understand are the people and their impact on the balance of the trinity. I believe that the prevailing school of thought in how best to throw the balance off is by directing high intensity destructive force at the adversary's army. This works well when confronting an adversary head to head in purely military engagements, but will not work well when the enemy hides amongst the population. Today we have become over reliant on technology, thinking we can influence and dominate all aspects of the battlefield with technological solutions. In the future we will not likely achieve success by

applying massed kinetic destruction because the enemy will not present mass targets, and even if they did, we are not willing to inflict the same level of casualties as we did during previous armed conflicts. Legal and moral conventions, adopted by our nation within the past sixty years, prohibit such targeting. The work of Ivan Arreguin-Tofts on the evolving nature of conflict has shown that success is more dependent on the strategy chosen to confront an enemy than on kinetic power alone.⁸ The population is so deeply embedded in and inseparable from the nature and components of war that in the future influencing them in such a manner as to unbalance the ‘trinity’ will become more effective than employing destructive, deadly force against the enemy.

Certain trends have been noted over the past few decades that lead many to believe and forecast that the major focus for U.S. military efforts will likely evolve into stability and peacekeeping operations.⁹ Military forces can and should expect to be involved in a wide assortment of operations that fall outside of the traditional role of military force. Thinking otherwise might be foolish, for it is simple reality that, in addition to our own significant force deployments, over 110,000 personnel from United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces were deployed throughout the world engaged in peace keeping operations during 2008.¹⁰ It is also widely recognized and already frequently observed that conflicts will continue to be fought in the middle of the general population. General Rupert Smith establishes in *Utility of Force*, that conflicts of the 21st century will be characterized as “war among the people” and that they will be much more complex than the conventional, military versus military battles of years past.¹¹ Keeping in mind Clausewitz’s ‘remarkable trinity’ the force that best influences

the population will be better able to throw the enemy off balance and is more likely to succeed in resolving the conflict in their favor.

We Have Been Globalized

Kofi Annan, seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, rightfully noted, “It has been said that arguing against globalization is like arguing against the laws of gravity.”¹²

The world has become so interconnected that actions, good and bad, spill across borders, regions and even continents and have the potential to impact others within days or even hours.¹³ Our environment, now and well into the future, is shaped by this extensive connectivity known as globalization. Globalization is the interconnected and interdependence of individuals’ and groups’ economic, financial, and social integration in world affairs. It has become an entirely new international system that influences and responds to the pursuit of self-interests. Globalization has replaced the Cold War system of “friends” and “enemies” with a new world system where everyone is considered, or can be, a “competitor”.¹⁴ The U.S. Marine Corps’ Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities (CETO) notes that globalization is a key factor, both positive and negative, associated with conflict. They identify that conflicts will be most likely to occur in areas where the population is expanding beyond its resource base and where the local government is unable to provide basic and essential services.¹⁵ A substantial amount of research on international conflict indicates that countries with a greater degree of connection to others, especially trade, tend to resort less to armed conflict as it is a less attractive and more costly form of conflict resolution.¹⁶ Although globalization can be a double edged sword when it comes to positive and negative outcomes, one

thing is clear. Globalization increases the ability to influence others, both internal and external to a nation.

An example of the impact globalization, and the relevance it has towards the importance of building or creating influence on a population, we look to the recent Defense Agency Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Network Challenge. The event, conducted during December 2009, was a competition to explore the role the Internet and social networking plays in solving broad scope, time-critical problems. The competition required participants to locate 10 large, red balloons at undisclosed locations across the United States. The balloons were all launched at the same time on the same day and were placed in readily accessible locations and visible from nearby roadways. A team of MIT students successfully located all ten balloons in less than 9 hours. The results and implications are astounding. A small group of students were able to mobilize and enlist into their cause an 'army' of observers who scoured the country and reported back balloon sightings...all within nine hours. The influence the MIT team projected across the country is a powerful indicator of the importance and reach of influence.¹⁷

The Internet is already being used by our adversaries in just such a manner. The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs recently investigated the threat of homegrown terrorism motivated by violent Islamist extremism and found that a significant portion of their recruitment and radicalization process is conducted via the Internet.¹⁸ Their investigation identified a wealth of material proliferated via various websites intended to appeal to the higher nature hierarchy of needs such as belonging, respect, acceptance of facts, morality, and self-esteem.

In short, globalization has created, or at least increased awareness and access to, both needs and opportunities, waiting to be filled.

Threats and Thugs

Nels F.S. Ferre, noted Swedish theologian, concisely describes the source of conflict, “A man who experiences no genuine satisfaction in life does not want peace. People court war to escape meaninglessness and boredom, to be relieved of fear and frustration.”¹⁹

The range of threats has increased greatly over the last eighty years. Threats now include state, non-state, or rouge actors using irregular, unconventional, or conventional methods. They operate in an asymmetric, unpredictable, hard to target manner and on regional, transnational, and global battlefields. Since the end of the Cold War the non-traditional threat has increased in significance and has proven exceptionally difficult to isolate and deal with. Their reason or motivation for armed conflict will range from physical survival to revenge to advancement of a specific ideology or religion. For the purpose of this paper we do not need to specifically define or identify the enemy at this point, just to understand what he is skilled at and capable of doing, in order to devise the most effective method for beating him.

On today’s battlefield the enemy is skilled at using the media to his advantage to influence local and world opinion.²⁰ Information and influence are having a more significant impact on the battlefield, both as a source of recruitment and support. One of our most notable adversaries, Osama Bin Laden, knows the value of influence,

Today’s world is of public opinion and the fates of nations are determined through its pressure. Once the tools for building public opinion are obtained, everything that you asked for can be done.²¹

Technological advances and globalization are helping the enemy expand his capabilities and reach just as they did for us. It enables him to connect with the motivations and hierarchy of needs of a vast 'army' of followers, and enables him to motivate, organize, coordinate and execute widely disbursed operations. The enemy is also skilled at embroiling the population into the battlefield and continuously attempts to weave ideology, politics, economics, religion, and military actions into his tactics.²² Because of these methods we find his followers difficult, if not impossible, to target.

The key development in modern warfare is not the wide range of threats nor the methods they use, rather the extent globalization has integrated large portions of the population, physically, mentally, and economically onto the modern battlefield. Military forces have to interact at the individual and small unit level with larger portions of the population during armed conflict. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to distinguish combatants from non-combatants. Global Trends 2025 predicts future conflicts will escalate and expand beyond the traditional battlefield and employ non-military means to manipulate public opinion and gain support.²³ Globalization has also necessitated moral, legal and economical sensibilities and conventions to be adopted by responsible, functioning governments to limit acceptance and use of large scale violence. The impact of such deadly force indiscriminately applied against adversaries is completely unacceptable. Also perhaps, we are more wisely recognizing that a military victory does not automatically lead to achieving the desired political outcome.

Our most skilled adversaries understand the relationship of short lived tactical, military victories and the long lasting strategic, political success. They adopt and

implement a strategy that capitalizes on, and properly weights, the strategic power of building influence over the lesser immediate impact of the tactic of destroying.

If we know our enemy and understand his capabilities as such, we should recognize the increasing importance of building influence over the population and decreasing effectiveness of destroying military forces as the method to prevail over the adversary. And in turning to the population we see it pursues a hierarchy of needs that is universal, can be reasonably well predicted, and can be used to our advantage. Understanding and building on the hierarchy can put friendly forces in a position of advantage over the adversary by massing popular support and action in our favor. On the modern battlefield the power of influence will take a leading role in gaining that position of advantage. Building this influence will become much more important than destroying forces or equipment.

Before addressing how best to influence human motivations let's first look into the hierarchy of needs and why it is such a compelling factor in influencing behavior though positive reinforcement rather than negative reinforcement.

Evolutionary Needs

Chanakya, considered the pioneer of the fields of economics and political science in ancient India noted, "There is some self-interest behind every friendship. There is no friendship without self-interests. This is a bitter truth."²⁴

The hierarchy of needs is a construct, derived from the theory of human motivation, advanced by Abraham H. Maslow (1908 – 1970) during the mid-twentieth century that essentially says all individuals pursue a hierarchy of needs that in large measure is based on self-interest and accounts for their behavior.²⁵ Maslow's hierarchy, illustrated in Figure 1, is divided into five basic areas, or essential needs; Physiological,

Safety, Love and Belonging, Esteem, and Self-actualization. All human beings have these essential needs.

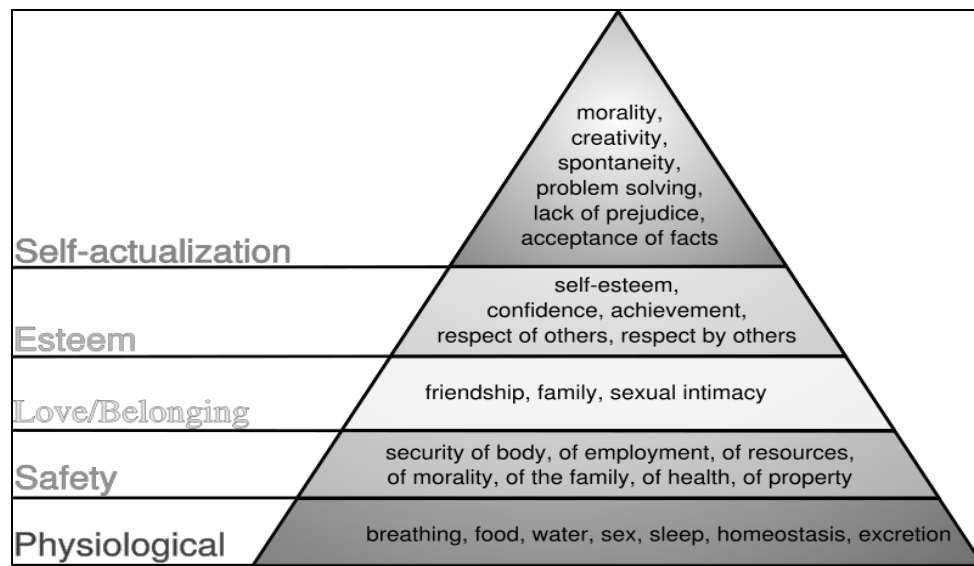


Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In a certain respect Maslow's research takes a leap forward from that of a portion of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, which essentially says that an individual's behavior is motivated by a biological compass that seeks to ensure the propagation of the species through a process of adaptation. It is commonly known as natural selection or survival of the fittest; the individual and species that is best able to adapt to the environment and meet basic survival needs will continue to evolve. Maslow's research leads to the conclusion that human beings also have a psychological compass that guides them in meeting more than just the basic needs in their struggle to survive.

He further determined that we both conscientiously or sub conscientiously, mentally and physically, pursue these five needs along a specific hierarchy until we reach self-actualization.²⁶ Some of the needs are physical and tangible, some are not. The first four needs are predominantly externally dependent and can be directly

influenced; the fifth need is internally dependent and not directly influenced. He further divided the needs into “lower nature” and “higher nature” needs depending on the underlying nature, or purpose, of their existence; physical or mental well being. Either way, all needs are both a result of, and cause for our existence and are inextricably linked to our biological and psychological evolution; they are universal and everlasting.

The first three needs are categorized as lower nature because they are most basic to our survival. When we are physically deficient these needs they preoccupy our thoughts and behavior until such time as we achieve them before moving on to other needs. We generally look to, and are dependent on, our external environment to satisfy these needs.²⁷ Lower nature needs of Physiological, Safety, and Love and Belonging are concerned with the most tangible, physical needs surrounding the individual and his immediate family. The remaining two needs, categorized as higher nature needs, consist of Esteem and Self-Actualization and are concerned with more intangible, emotional, psychological needs of the individual. They are still very real, just difficult to isolate and identify, and are less dependent on, and influenced by, the external environment. The highest of these needs are for “meaningful work, for responsibility, for creativeness, for being fair and just, for doing what is worthwhile and for preferring to do it well.” It is roughly analogous to the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. It includes needs like dignity, respect, appreciation, honor, truth, justice, order, and lawfulness.²⁸

There is a closely related field of study that corroborates Maslow’s work - evolutionary psychology. Robert Wright’s study in this field, which views behavior in relation to Darwinian Theory of evolution, also lends insight into human behavior and reinforces the significance of self-interest.²⁹ In most simplistic terms, his research

postulates that the human species consciously and subconsciously behaves in such a manner as will best propagate his genes, and thus the species.³⁰ Although Wright does not identify that man is aware of a hierarchy of needs, he does note that man behaves out of self interest in both lower nature and higher nature needs, both of which are essential to help his genes continue on into the future.³¹ Self interest, whether it is for biological or psychological interests, is such a powerful motivator because it is so deeply ingrained in our very being and therefore our will. It is so carefully followed, although not always obvious, and is ignored only at grave risk of extinction. This is why it can be such a compelling tool to influence behavior.

What is unique about Maslow's research, that has a new application to the employment of military forces, is that it involved healthy individuals so it lead him to conclusions of the behavior of healthy people, not disturbed, deranged, unhealthy people. Although Maslow focuses on healthy people and the underlying decency of mankind, he fully understands and recognizes the dark side of humanity. He developed his theory in part based on observations of man's cruelty and viciousness during multiple, devastating wars, yet still focuses on the healthy individual.³² If we approach armed conflict in a similar manner in which Maslow approached his research we will find that our tactics can mirror Maslow's conclusions of the importance and relevance of satisfying needs. Instead of focusing solely on destroying an adversary, i.e. an unhealthy individual, focus on building the strength, capacities, and resiliencies of the healthy population surrounding that adversary. This approach still seeks to defeat the adversary's will, just approaches it using a different method, one that the enemy will find

exceptionally difficult to counter or risk alienating the very population that he seeks safety and support from.

The thoughtful military leader can incorporate this knowledge into his actions and develop methods and tactics to appeal to or satisfy any number of the hierarchy of needs to influence individuals in order to succeed on the battlefield. This is not easy by any stretch of the imagination. There are forces at work both within the target's needs and within our own needs that may be at odds with each other. When looking at the potential target's needs we must consider and understand his environment and culture.³³ What we may think is a logical need may in fact not even be close to his real need. Those circumstances can be managed if one understands the culture and surrounding environment. Understanding this human dimension goes far beyond cultural awareness, and leads to understanding values and norms. Additionally, when looking at our own needs we can readily agree that satisfying our basic safety needs may put us at odds with venturing out of a base and into an area where death can easily be waiting. The difficulties associated with using the hierarchy of needs on the battlefield are not insurmountable, and the individual that recognizes and satisfies them is the one most likely to gain significant influence over the population.

Adapt and Overcome

Alvin Toffler, American writer and futurist of the mid 1900s, held firm that, "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."³⁴

What will it take to go beyond mere victory on the modern battlefield and successfully resolve a conflict? What will it take to overcome adversaries hiding in such a complex operating environment, using such asymmetric methods? Success on the

modern battlefield will rest with the individual or group that can think, adapt, strike and react the fastest. As Charles Darwin discovered, “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” As we better understand human nature, we can use the hierarchy of needs to gain a position of advantage over our adversary. How we leverage the hierarchy of needs relies mainly on the building aspect of a soldier’s capabilities. Human nature can be exceptionally violent, and the thoughts advanced in this paper should not be taken as suggesting or advocating that all conflicts can be resolved without fighting and bloodshed. Not so, but I am advocating that military leaders, well versed in human nature, that apply critical, open-minded thinking can succeed with a minimum level of fighting and bloodshed using the hierarchy of needs. We would be wise to carefully think of the past and the nature of our current operating environment to develop new tools for future warfighting.

Consider our current and likely still emerging, stability doctrine. The U.S. Agency for International Development has developed the Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework (TCAPF) as a tool for military commanders to use during stability operations. The TCAPF is the method in which military forces connect with a local population in order to determine the primary causes of instability, to assess the needs, to execute the activities most likely to diminish the instability, and then to evaluate the effectiveness toward fostering stability.³⁵ In general terms, TCAPF helps the tactical and operational commander assess the hierarchy of needs of the civilian population in his area of interest. The frontline mind is most concerned with the lower nature needs within the hierarchy since they are most likely to lead to tactical success. These are needs he can readily identify with – the Safety and Physiological needs; food, water, shelter,

security, property, health, etc. He must also be attentive to the higher nature needs which can lead to operational or strategic success sought after using the TCAPF.

Although perhaps not intimately familiar with the higher nature needs he is certainly no stranger to them as he easily recognizes them when provided to him; respect, value, fairness, friendship, sense of belonging, etc. All are powerful motivators that can be used to our advantage.

Just as Charles Gordon observed and demonstrated over a century ago – it requires a thinking man, a man who is both statesman and warrior. First and foremost it will require critical, open-minded thinking that is quick, flexible and adaptable. Second, it will take a clear understanding of our environment, our enemy, and ourselves. As retired Army General David Barno notes in ‘Military Adaptation in Complex Operations’, we sometimes mistakenly develop a friendly strategy that focuses more on fighting the enemies’ tactics, and employing inadequate tactics against his strategy. This is the case he argues for operations against terrorists and insurgents. The modern day insurgent focuses most of his efforts at a strategic message and only a small effort at conducting a tactical terrorist action that achieves his message, whereas the American military focuses most of the effort of preventing the terrorist action, but only a fraction of the time and effort countering the terrorist’s strategy.³⁶

Sun Tzu recognized the importance of human nature and the hierarchy of need and provides several exceptionally wise insights in conducting war. It is better to “attack the enemy’s strategy” and “disrupt his alliances”, for “to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.” The least desirable action is to attack the enemy’s forces.³⁷ If we expand Sun Tzu’s concept of disrupting alliances into creating alliances we open

up another dimension of the building aspect of a soldier's duties. If we build and maintain alliances that undermine the adversary we gain a position of advantage that becomes nearly impossible to undo. If an alliance with the local population is built on helping them achieve their hierarchy of needs we do two things toward success; 1) undermine the adversary's influence over and support from the population, and 2) build protection for ourselves and our cause. In essence, if we understand the needs of the population which surrounds the enemy we are more likely to defeat our adversary without fighting. There are a variety of successful attempts using the hierarchy of needs to build alliances throughout our past that illustrate this understanding; the Combined Action Platoons during Vietnam, Task Force Dagger during the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, and the Sons of Iraq in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Consider other examples of leaders that capitalized on understanding the hierarchy of needs and employed the tactic of building in order to succeed on the battlefield to resolve conflicts.

As Colonel Butler noted of Charles Gordon's approach to resolving conflicts during the 1800's, after decades of fighting and nation building experiences across the globe, that a soldier can be more effective if he is employed in building rather than in breaking. From 1860 through 1884 Gordon achieved great success in China, India, Botswana, Sudan and Ireland providing for the basic needs of the general population while building their ability to govern themselves.³⁸ Gordon seems to have pulled a page out of Clausewitz in his approach to warfighting, "The maximum use of force is in no way incompatible with the simultaneous use of intellect."³⁹ Gordon skillfully recognized the importance of careful, deliberate thinking to select the right tool to achieve success.

During the course of operations in Afghanistan in 2005 a U.S. medical team treated a young Afghan boy's father. The boy later reported the location of a weapons cache and led coalition authorities to a nearby village where they searched the house in question and seized a considerable number of RPGs, IED components, explosives, one machine gun and two bags of opium.⁴⁰ Although simple and perhaps not having a huge impact on the larger battlefield, this vignette identifies a thoughtful and successful method of building trust and cooperation to influence the local population to support coalition force's objectives to remove/reduce dangerous weapons. Coalition forces used medical assistance to satisfy one of the hierarchies of needs, and in return gained an ally, got cooperation, and achieved success in denying the enemy deadly weapons.

We must be ready to respond to a wide variety of threats and we must do it well. As we look to our past, there is compelling precedence to accept this role. Almost a century ago Secretary of War Lindley Garrison noted to the 1914 graduating class of West Point that they "may be called upon to do any kind of service in any part of the world" and they must do it well. Previously and erroneously thought of as "merely a fighting man", today's military man, the Secretary went on to say is the "handy man of the Government".⁴¹ Department of Defense Directive 3000.5 carries the responsibility of the "handy man" into the future as it prepares the military to execute a wide range of duties associated with stability operations, with or without civilian augmentation.⁴²

In 1847 General Winfield Scott arrived in Mexico City after a fairly quick and decisive victory in Vera Cruz and inland march to the capital. He arrived in the city short on combat power, with an over extended supply line, and facing conditions ripe for a protracted insurgency and irregular enemy. Scott clearly understood the key to success

was to appeal to the population's self-interest. He set about in word and deed to assure the population of his (and the U.S. governments') intentions. Unmoved by this daunting challenge, he set about developing and orchestrating thoughtful and innovative political, economic and social reforms that garnered the trust, respect and cooperation of the population. He involved local officials and law enforcement, sometimes with threat of violence, to help resolve problems and maintain order.⁴³ Throughout the campaign he constantly demonstrated a keen awareness and focus on providing for the hierarchy of needs of the local population to achieve his military objectives – security and safety, as well as political objectives - lasting peace.

In 443B.C. Corcyra and Corinth were headed toward armed conflict. Each state dispatched Ambassadors to win over and ally with the Athenians in order to strengthen their forces and thus ensure victory. Corcyra arrived first and delivered an unemotional address highlighting the potential of their alliance since the Corcyra navy was second only to Athens'. The Corcyra ambassador admitted that no previous friendship between the two states had ever existed before, and in fact Corcyra had even allied with Athens' enemies before. But an alliance today would certainly benefit Athens' efforts to counter their current rival Sparta. The Corinthian ambassador spoke next delivering a fiery, passionate speech about the past relationship the two states enjoyed and mentioned all the things Corinth had done for Athens. The ambassador strongly suggested that their past loyalty to Athens warranted current support. The Athenians debated the issue in assembly and quickly decided to ally with Corcyra because the benefit the new relationship would provide best served their interests. The Corcyrans knew the Athenians were pragmatic people and that an appeal to future self interest would be far

more impressionable than a reminder of past loyalty. “And in the end, most people *are* in fact pragmatic – they will rarely act against their own self-interest.”⁴⁴

Turning our sights closer to home we find similar alliances in our colonial past. During the King Phillip’s War, 1675 – 1676, there are numerous accounts of Indians forming alliances with colonists. Particular details of why this war started and how it unfolded are not as important as who fought the war. Suffice it to say, for quite some time prior to the war tension between the Indians and colonists had been escalating, but were usually resolved peacefully. Early records show that armed violence was initiated by an Indian known as King Phillip against colonists living in Massachusetts. Of particular importance is the fact that there were several Indian tribes, as well as individuals from the warring tribes themselves, that allied with the colonists. It was an Indian who alerted the Colonists of King Phillip’s attack plans, and an Indian that ended the war when he killed Phillip. There are multiple accounts of Indians valiantly fighting alongside colonists.⁴⁵ The relationship they established was not based on dominance or coercion, but rather on mutual self-interest. The colonists and their allied Indians each relied on the other to provide essential lower nature and higher nature needs. The reasons the Indians broke away from their heritage and sometimes their own kin must have been exceptionally compelling. The alliance even continued several decades after King Phillip’s War ended as Indians joined their colonist allies to fight the French and Indians in Maine.⁴⁶

The common thread through the historical examples above is that self interest in satisfying a need is a universal quality and an exceptionally strong motivator. We can greatly influence an adversary’s will by focusing on the population that surrounds the

enemy. We must build on the hierarchy of needs of the population at large. Influencing the population in this way will generate mass in whatever direction we reinforce. Positive reinforcement will garner positive mass. Harnessing the collective self-interest, even if it is one village at a time, will generate the mass needed to overcome the enemy. Building influence, more so than delivering destruction, leaves a greater mark and more lasting impression.

A New Way Forward

Woodrow Wilson believed and observed, “It is not the whip that makes men, but the lure of things that are worthy to be loved.”⁴⁷

A new approach to warfighting is needed to adapt to the realities of globalization and to defeat our adversaries on the modern battlefield. Central to the new method is an understanding of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, the environment in which armed conflict will be waged, and the nature of the enemy against us. Now and well into the future the key attribute of our adversary is that he hides amongst a population and freely moves people, money and material around the globe with little fear of a U.S. or allied delivered kinetic strike. On the modern battlefield we will be faced with an adversary that is adaptive and hides amongst the population. He will not be drawn out into the open for a quick, clean kill. He is, nonetheless, still vulnerable, although perhaps not by a destructive weapon or force. If we adopt tactics or methods that focus not on physically destroying our adversary, but rather on building alliances with the population that surrounds the enemy we make him vulnerable. The strength of these alliances is built on the hierarchy of needs and history is replete with examples of these alliances, formed at the tactical through strategic level, which proved decisive.

A better understanding of the hierarchy of needs will lead to new tactics and methods which will enable us to favorably influence the will and behavior of the civilian population to support our forces, and therefore undermine the enemy's capability and will to fight. Clausewitz even notes that it, "is possible to increase the likelihood of success without defeating the enemy's forces" when specific actions are taken to disrupt the enemy's alliance, build our own alliances, or influence political will.⁴⁸ Armed with this new knowledge, our military forces will be able to rapidly and accurately shift between employing soft power and hard power to achieve short term battlefield victory as well as long term success.

Endnotes

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